



MEDIA ALERT

PHOTO & INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT MY LIFE YOUTH DAY AT THE CAPITOL

WHO MY LIFE (Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment) is a group comprised of youth, ages 13 to 23, who have experienced mental health, substance abuse and/or foster care-related issues. The group gives youth an opportunity to use their experience, talents and voice to make positive changes in their lives, while helping other youths do the same.

The MY LIFE program recently was selected as a finalist in a regional competition that recognizes innovation in state government. Arizona's Department of Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health Services was one of six 2009 Western regional finalists for the Council of State Governments (CSG) Annual Innovations Awards.

- 100 MY LIFE youth, friends & families will take part in MY LIFE Youth Day at the Capitol
- 25 mental health, substance abuse, community and youth-serving organizations, including Jewish Family and Children's Services, Children's Action Alliance, Florence Crittenton and others, will provide information and resource materials
- Arizona state legislators will meet with MY LIFE youth to discuss important issues

HIGHLIGHTS MY LIFE youth, along with an array of other youth-serving organizations, will participate in dance and music performances, poetry and essay presentations, and distribution of information and resources to the public on issues of importance to Arizona's youth on the Capitol lawn.

Following the public event on the lawn, MY LIFE youth will meet as a group with Arizona state legislators to share their concerns and "Top 5 List" of issues they feel most impact youth in Arizona and in which they would like their state leaders to address.

MY LIFE youth will also tour the Capitol building and be recognized on the floor of the House for their efforts in helping other youth prior to the House session getting underway.

WHEN **Wednesday, February 10**
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

WHERE **Arizona State Capitol – Capitol Lawn**
1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix

YOUTH INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Nina suffered from mental health and anger issues which increased greatly after her mother gave up on her and gave her away. She bounced around the foster care system for years, but found a caring mentor who showed her that she was worth something. Nina is set to graduate from college this summer as a certified medical assistant and hopes to eventually become an RN to help others, just as she found help. Nina is a Glendale resident (85302).

Adrian could have become a victim of the foster care system, but he chose to be a survivor and now serves as a mentor to other youth who may be struggling with mental health, substance abuse and/or foster care issues. When he left an abusive home situation and was awarded to the state, he found a new life through counseling, education and caring mentors. He wants to share his message of hope and success with other youth through MY LIFE and knows that he may not be able to help every teen, but that he "can help one youth at a time to make a positive change, and that's what I intend to do." Adrian is now living on his own and attends Glendale Community College. He is a Glendale resident (85302).

Xavier was mad at the world, and his mental health issues kept getting him into trouble. He knew he needed to make a change in his attitude and life in order to find full recovery. Through his rap music, he's found a creative outlet in which to share his thoughts and feelings. He also finds that counseling other youth and empathizing with the personal and mental health issues they may be dealing with through his role in MY LIFE helps him in his own recovery as well. Xavier is pursuing a college education to keep him on a successful path for the future. He is a Phoenix resident (85013).

Hayley has been surrounded by substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence and homelessness. Many times, she was on the verge of suicide. At just 16 years old, that's an almost overwhelming life situation to handle—almost. Hayley found help through various behavioral health services and compassionate adult and peer mentors. She made school a top priority and became involved in the mental health community where she discovered that she wasn't "crazy," and that there were other youth out there just like her. She now serves as a co-chairperson for MY LIFE and continually strives to help other teens change their lives for the better. Haley is a Phoenix resident (85041).

**Media
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About Magellan Health Services of Arizona, Inc.

As the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Maricopa County, Magellan Health Services of Arizona serves as a critical point of connection to the more than 80,000 individuals who have experienced life challenges as a result of mental illness and substance abuse. Magellan gives these individuals voice and choice to realize their desired outcomes, and supports them with caring, unrivaled customer service that is sensitive to the diversity of our communities. For more information, visit www.MagellanofAZ.com or call Magellan Member Services at (800) 564-5465 / TTY (800) 424-9831.